Radio Child Study Club
Iowa Child Welfare Research Station
State University of Iowa

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING RADIO TALKS

1. The length of the talk should be fifteen minutes. The listener's reaction is influenced by other factors in addition to length, such as the interest of the topic and the quality of the speaker's voice. Writers are encouraged to test the interest of their talks on small groups. Sometimes a speaker needs special devices such as dramatization to build up interest.

2. Since groups have access to reading references, it is not necessary for the discussion to cover the entire field. The special functions of the radio talks may be: (a) presenting new material, (b) motivating through novel, original, and vivid examples, or (c) setting out in relief three or four major generalizations, thus guiding and stimulating discussion.

3. Our analyses of reading material for parents indicate that much of it is far too general to be useful. To make the material useful show by several everyday practical examples how the principles are applied intelligently.

4. In choosing illustrations the author should keep in mind whether the talk is intended for the infant, preschool, elementary school, or adolescent course.

5. When using statistics it is in general advisable to talk in round numbers.

6. A significant proportion of the population between nineteen and forty-five has not extended its education beyond the eighth grade. One investigation reported characteristics of reading materials that can be comprehended by the average parent of this type as follows: (a) low vocabulary difficulty, that is, words understood on the average by 94% of sixth grade pupils; (b) simplified sentence structure, that is, a large proportion of simple sentences (average 16 per 500 words) or a small proportion of words in dependent clauses (average 19%); and (c) a small number of prepositional phrases (average 43 per 500 words). These characteristics apply in the main to materials discussing relatively concrete relationships. If highly abstract relationships are considered, it is helpful to use an abundance of concrete examples.

7. It is suggested that the author check the delivery of his talk to make sure that it is within the time allotted for the broadcast. Since it is not possible for the author to be present at both radio stations, one of the broadcasts will be given by a reader. To allow for variations in reading rate, the author should indicate one or two paragraphs which may be omitted, if necessary.

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